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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT NO.

# INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

COUNTRY USSR (Latvian SSR)

DATE DISTR. 15 Oct. 1951.

**SUBJECT** Transportation Facilities, Roads, and Bridges in Latvia

NO. OF PAGES 2

25X1A

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### Transportation Facilities

Nail

1. According to source, traffic control is good on Latvian railroads and there are few late trains. Schedules are somewhat slower than they were before the war, however. The day after the Riga-Dubulti line, electrified in July 1950, began to operate, a bad accident occurred, and all engineers are now instructed to use less speed. Trains on this line usually consist of four or five cars.

Air

2. Civilian airlines are used for travel to other Soviet republics and for internal Latvian transportation. The office of the civilian airlines system in Riga is at the corner of Skolas and Lacplesa Streets. Traffic connections are maintained between Riga and Leningrad, Tallinn, Vilnius, Minsk, and Moscow. The flight from Riga to Moscow costs about 300 rubles and takes about four and a half hours. There are several airlines which are used for internal Latvian traffic, for example, between Riga and Lepaya and between Riga and Daugavpils. Civilian airlines in Riga use the old airfield at Spilve. Another civilian airfield is located about three kilometers from Riga at a place called Talsi (not located but obviously not the one at 57-15N, 22-38E).

## Automobile

3. There are more automobiles in Latvia at the present time than in the years before the war and, though most cars belong to the military or government authorities, there are also many private cars. In addition to Soviet Pobeda and Moskvich cars, it is possible to see in Riga the German BMW and the American Willys. The latter were obtained from the United States through Lend-Lease.

Bus

4. There is extensive bus traffic in Latvia; there are lines between Riga and the following cities: Jelgava, Dobele, Talsi, Stende, Ape, Ogre, (Riga) Strand, and Rigas Jurmala.

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Boat

5. Riverways, though never important in Latvia, do exist but are poorly maintained. There is a boat line between Riga and Jelgava for transport of freight and passengers, and in Riga the harbor for river boats is in the vicinity of the railroad bridge on one side of the Daugava River.

Roads

- 25X1X 6. The road between Riga and Strand is the best road in Latvia; last year (1949) it was widened two meters and it is now in excellent condition. [REDACTED] 25X1X [REDACTED] the roads between Riga and Sigulda, Valka, and Jelgava are in good condition but he does not know whether or not they have been widened. He knows nothing about construction of any super highways or extensive road building in Latvia, but says that the non-macadam roads are generally in good condition and are better than in the immediate post-war years. While road maintenance formerly was a State function, in the future cities are to be responsible for roads in their areas. Most city roads are about the same as they were prior to the war.

Bridges

- 25X1X 7. [REDACTED] in addition to the two railroad bridges in Riga there is a pontoon bridge from six to eight meters wide constructed of wood and metal in the area near Svaru Street. Another pontoon bridge of the same type connects Valdemara Street and Kalnciema Street. These two bridges were constructed by the Soviets after the war and were intended for use by cars and streetcar lines. Streets connected with these bridges were laid but it was later decided that the bridges were too small for both streetcars and vehicles, and the whole idea was abandoned. The railroad bridge on the Riga-Tukums line, which crosses at Lielupe, was rebuilt in the summer of 1950 and is somewhat better than the former bridge at the same location. The bridge at the dam which is part of the Kegums Electric Station is closely watched by MVD guards, and all persons on foot must have a pass from the MVD commandant and are searched by guards.

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COUNTRY USSR (Latvian SSR)

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**SUBJECT** Regulations for Postal and Radio Communications  
and Photography in Latvia **FOR CRITICAL SECURITY REASONS**

NO. OF PAGES 1

PLACE 25X1A

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## Postal Regulations

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1. Mail from Latvia to foreign addresses is generally censored, but [REDACTED] 25X1X  
[REDACTED] censorship of an in-  
dividual letter largely depends on the postal official who checks through  
the letters. [REDACTED] some postal authorities send all letters to the 25X1X  
censor, while others send only an occasional letter for examination.  
Letters to foreign addresses are often marked with a false return address;  
[REDACTED] while older persons may send letters abroad without 25X1X  
much difficulty, younger Latvians who communicate with persons in foreign  
countries may be called to the MVD and questioned concerning themselves  
and their correspondence. [REDACTED] no information concerning reprisals 25X1X  
for mailing letters abroad but is convinced that persons who are in con-  
tact with foreign countries are listed by the MVD.

## Radios

2. After payment of a license fee, there is no necessity for a person to obtain permission either to own, purchase, or repair a radio. While it is not forbidden to listen to foreign broadcasts, persons who do attempt to follow foreign programs are very careful and do not dare to discuss what they hear with anyone else. Until 1950 it was possible to listen to foreign news broadcasts, but at the present time the Soviet jamming of foreign stations is so effective that it is impossible to hear any foreign stations broadcasting to the Soviet area. In Riga it is possible to purchase either a small radio which picks up only the local station or a large set costing from eight to nine hundred rubles. The latter is prohibitively expensive for the general public.

## Photography

3. There are no regulations concerning taking of photographs on the streets of Riga so long as non-military objects are being photographed. Nevertheless, the concept of a "military object" is very broad, and it is wise for the individual to be circumspect in his range of photographic interests. [REDACTED] 25X1X  
[REDACTED] it is sensible to group individuals in any picture of any single building, since this makes the act of photographing much less conspicuous. 25X1X

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## INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

25X1A

COUNTRY USSR

DATE DISTR. 15 Oct. 1951

SUBJECT Urban and Rural Living and Working Conditions  
in Latvia

NO. OF PAGES 3

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Urban Living and Working Conditions

1. Food conditions in Latvia are much improved since the immediate post-war years, and most foods are available on the market, though prices are very high. Food is no longer rationed and only sugar is in extremely short supply. When an occasional shop has sugar for sale, it is possible to see a line of hopeful customers stretching almost two miles from the store. Farm produce markets (kolkhoz markets) are maintained in Riga at the Central Market Hall, Matisa Market, and the Agenskalna Market.

Prices

2. The following are a few food and drink prices prevailing in the Latvian SSR in October 1950:

	Rubles
Milk, per liter . . . . .	3-4
Butter, per kg . . . . .	40
Sugar, per kg . . . . .	18
White rolls, each . . . . .	1-5.2
Bakery goods, each . . . . .	3.5
Sausage, per kg . . . . .	20-45
Chicken, each . . . . .	30-40
Pickles, per kg . . . . .	7
Anchovy, per pkg. . . . .	15
Baltic herring, per pkg. . . . .	25
Chocolate, per bar . . . . .	15-40
Choc. candy, per kg . . . . .	40-50
Potato gin, per liter . . . . .	40-60
Liquor, per bottle . . . . .	35-38
Caucasian wine, per 3/4 liter . . . . .	20-25
Crimean champagne, per liter . . . . .	20
Apples, per kilo . . . . .	15-16 rubles a
(Source says last year the price was 4-5 rubles a kilo, but the season was very poor in 1950.)	
Beer, per bottle . . . . .	2.70-3

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3. The following are a few prices of general items prevailing in the Latvian SSR in October 1950:

	<u>Rubles</u> , except as noted
Men's shoes	300
Women's shoes	250
Average suit	700-1,500
Man's coat (for labor alone)	300
Man's suit (tailor made, labor alone)	270
Woman's dress (tailor made, labor alone)	120
Cotton cloth, per meter	8
FED camera (hard to find)	1,000
Film	6
Four-tube radio	800-900
Electric iron	40
Electric plate	25
Streetcar ticket, one zone	30 kopeks
Bus ticket, one zone	30 kopeks
Domestic letter	40 kopeks
Insured letter	1
"Zvezda" wristwatch	400-700
Gold watch	about 2,000
Ordinary ring, medium-sized	200
One gram of gold	100 (uncertain)
Leather briefcase	400-500

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4. [REDACTED] the following information concerning certain special types of consumer goods:

- a. Gasoline: not rationed but difficult to obtain. Almost impossible to obtain for private use. [REDACTED] chauffeurs for government officials are not given full tanks in their cars. Gasoline costs from 3-3.5 rubles a liter.
- b. Oil and oil products: these products are very difficult to obtain and it is impossible to purchase paints with an oil base; the substitute product does not weather well.
- c. Rubber products: it is somewhat easier to obtain rubber substitutes at this time, and automobile and bicycle tires are readily available though they are of inferior quality and wear out quickly.
- d. Iron and steel: it is somewhat easier to purchase small nails, but hard to purchase razor blades, knives, and household equipment.
- e. Paper: hard to locate and of poor quality. Writing paper is poor and difficult to obtain.
- f. Furniture: although much furniture is manufactured in Riga, most of it is shipped to the Soviet Union, and it is difficult and expensive to purchase household necessities.
- g. Foreign goods: Czechoslovak materials and shoes are sometimes available in Riga and are immediately sold out, since they are of better quality than domestic goods. Czechoslovak tableware is sold in Riga, [REDACTED] has seen English and German pharmaceuticals in drugstores.

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#### Wages and Salaries

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5. The largest incomes in Latvia are earned by Party and Government officials. Prime Minister V. Lacis was paid a salary of 25,000 rubles a month, [REDACTED] Scholars and officers are well paid, as are artists and authors. Minor Government servants, teachers, persons working in stores, and manual workers are poorly paid.

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6. The following are a few rates of pay prevailing in the Latvian SSR in October 1950:

	<u>Rubles per month</u>
Professor in art academy	1,100-1,800
Director of dermatology dispensary	950
Assistant doctor	500 (seventy-five rubles a month increase after five years)
Nurse	370
Kindergarten teacher	600
Kindergarten teacher without exam.	300-400
High school teacher	700-800
Grade school teacher	300-500
Unskilled worker	250-300
Skilled worker	600-700
Streetcar conductor	300-500
Lieutenant in artillery	1,200
Major in army	2,000 (approximately)

health insurance, bonds, and union dues take about twenty percent of the basic salary.

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#### Rural Living and Working Conditions

7. There is a severe shortage of manpower in the rural areas of Latvia, and the labor force includes many physically incapable individuals; there are few younger people who will work on farms. this difficulty may result eventually in a decline in the standard of living. Morale among the agrarian population is poor; the people seem tired and discouraged.

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#### Agricultural Conditions

8. About ninety percent of the farms in Latvia have been amalgamated into the kolkhoz system, and during 1950 many new kolkhozy were formed with even more extensive collective farming methods than had formerly been used. Private farming is rarely found any longer and seems to occur only when the individual farmer is excluded from a kolkhoz because of political unreliability.

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all farmers want to join the kolkhoz because production norms and taxes for individual farms are prohibitively high. Persons living on collective farms are permitted to own their own animals but must pay a heavy tax in kind on such livestock. Since livestock for tax purposes is valued much lower than the market price, it is not profitable to keep private stock. It sometimes happens that a kolkhoz farmer will come to the free market and sell two hens for 80 rubles, then purchase two kilograms of butter, which he will use to pay his tax on his cow. For the butter that he has purchased for 80 rubles he will be credited with only 20 rubles tax money.

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9. Collective farmers are paid both in money and in produce, and the working day is figured on the basis of a definite amount of work produced. A harvest worker must bind 100 sheaves a day, for which he is paid 2.5 kilograms of bread and 70 kopeks in money.
10. Soviet propaganda attempts are less suitable to agrarian than to urban districts because, even though there are some Soviet-type collectives with large common living quarters and dining halls, most farmers live in their own homes and are thus less concentrated and accessible for propaganda purposes.

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Deportations from Latvia

5. The most recent mass deportations from Latvia occurred in March 1949, when Riga was largely untouched by the MGB but many persons from rural areas were seized and deported. [REDACTED] there are fewer arrests at the present time, but that no one has any sense of personal security. It is often possible to see MGB trucks guarded by armed personnel leaving the city and returning in full daylight with a load of farmers who have been arrested and who subsequently disappear without trial. 25X1X

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT NO.

## INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

25X1A

COUNTRY USSR (Latvian SSR)

DATE DISTR. 15 Oct. 1951

**SUBJECT** Coastal Defenses in Latvia

NO. OF PAGES 1

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1. An anti-aircraft and coastal defense battery is located at Melnmeze (not located) at the mouth of the Uzava River. No further details are known on this installation, but various calibers of artillery were observed during recent maneuvers.
2. A coastal battery at Staldzene (57-25N, 21-38E) is composed of four or six paired guns which are placed about 100 meters apart. No further data is available.
3. A coastal battery is located at Ovisi (57-35N, 21-43E), but its composition is unknown.
4. A coastal battery of six heavy and six light guns is located at Mikelgaka (sic; probably Mikelbaka, 57-38N, 21-56E). The guns are protected by camouflaged armor, and are arranged in pairs of one heavy and one light gun, with 150 to 200 meters between each pair of guns. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Latvian coastal artillery installations were increased during the summer of 1950, with new heavy guns being transported to the area.
5. An MVD coast guard regiment is stationed at Ventspils, equipped with four large and twelve small patrol boats. The larger boats have been observed at sea with a crew of 12 to 18 men. Another coast guard group is located at Kelka (sic; probably Kolka, 57-45N, 22-35E), using two or three patrol boats.
6. A coast guard station is located about three kilometers south of Ventspils and a wooden tower built by the Germans is still standing in the area. A coast guard unit is quartered in barracks at Staldzene and two-man patrols are sent out from this station to check on the beach area. Cavalry patrols have also been seen in this vicinity. A coast guard tower is located at Liepne (57-30N, 21-39E), not far from the fishing harbor; this tower is not very high and is manned by only one guard. A small tower and guard unit is located at Jaunupe (57-32N, 21-40E). A coast guard group is maintained at Ovisi, and a tower manned by two guards is located northwest of the railroad.
7. At the present time there are fewer coastal patrols on the Kurzeme coast than there are in the area near the Estonian Islands and south of Lepaya. It is difficult to approach the coastal region from inland, since special permission is necessary to approach nearer than seven to ten kilometers of the coast.

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1. A fairly large number of military personnel are evident in the streets of Riga, and at the end of the working day it is estimated that from 15 to 20 percent of all persons on the street are military personnel. The majority are infantry personnel, although there are also Navy and Air Force men, and occasionally MVD soldiers.
2. Outside the city it is possible to see whole units of artillery and tank troops, although source does not know the location of their camps. One Latvian unit, possibly a division, is quartered at Kors Church in northern Riga. There are many soldiers in the Citadelle area, and Air Force personnel are quartered on Slokas iela on the west side of the Daugava River. If one takes a streetcar through this area it is possible to see a long factory-like building from which issues much noise of engines, although they possibly are not aircraft engines. Other troops seem to be stationed at the so-called Jacob Camp at Pulvertorn (this latter is the **powder** tower attached to the War Museum); these are probably personnel of the Nakhimov School, which is quartered in the **Pulvertorn** and adjacent buildings. The former Latvian military school at Kristjana Barona iela was used by Soviet troops in 1946. In the building opposite the art academy on Valdemar iela there is a school for evening classes for the militia. The former Ministry of Defense which was burned down during the German retreat has been rebuilt but source does not know how it is used. [REDACTED] it is rumored that 25X1X there is an artillery practice field about ten kilometers from **Baltezers**, a suburb of Riga. In the summer of 1950 [REDACTED] five or six truckloads of armed soldiers being driven in this direction. 25X1X
3. Naval vessels rarely dock in Riga, but when the large military parades are held on May Day and November 7 it is usual for twelve to fifteen naval ships to be brought to the city and anchored between the castle and the pontoon bridge. Only on one occasion [REDACTED] a submarine in the Daugava River. [REDACTED] there is a naval station near the mouth of the Daugava River, since there are often sailors in fast boats on the river. [REDACTED] no information concerning coastal artillery guns in the Riga area and saw none in Vecaki, where he visited. Early in September 1950 it was possible to hear heavy artillery to the north of Riga. 25X1X

[illegible]

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4. The discipline of Soviet military personnel is good, and all branches of military personnel are saluted. There are few drunken soldiers, and many more drunken officers than soldiers are seen.

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5. [REDACTED] no information concerning provincial military garrisons. At the Sigulda, Rezekne and Balvi stations he has seen many soldiers, and assumes that there are garrisons in the neighborhood of these villages. The Sigulda Castle houses some type of school.
6. There are airfields at Daugavpils, between Daugavpils and Ilukste in the Rezekne area, and at Lepaya, on both sides of the road to Grobina.
7. Some members of the Latvian Legionnaires who were captured after the fall of Kurzeme in 1945 were placed in a camp in Riga between Sarkandaugava and Meza Parks and others were sent to a camp in the Moscow area. Some of the latter prisoners have returned to Riga, but source does not know what persons are still held in the camp in Riga.

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